

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended): A method of fabricating a semiconductor device, the method comprising:
 - depositing a single and continuous layer to a predetermined thickness on a wafer;
 - planarizing the deposited layer to remove a portion of the deposited layer, the resulting planarized layer comprising a uniform region of uniform thickness extending along a wafer surface at which the deposited layer is uniformly planarized, and a non-uniform region of non-uniform thickness ~~corresponding to~~ extending along an upper sidewall of the wafer at which the deposited layer is non-uniformly planarized, wherein the non-uniform thickness is greater than the uniform thickness;
 - coating a photoresist layer on the planarized layer;
 - removing a portion of the photoresist layer coated on an edge portion of the uniform region of the planarized layer and on the non-uniform region of the planarized layer, thereby exposing at least the non-uniform region of the planarized layer;
 - etching at least the exposed non-uniform region of the planarized layer; and
 - stripping a remaining portion of the coated photoresist layer on the planarized layer, thereby forming a pattern layer comprising a portion of the uniform region of the planarized layer.
2. (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein the planarizing comprises a chemical mechanical polishing (CMP) process.

3. (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein the coating of the photoresist layer continues until the photoresist layer has a thickness of approximately 5000-15000 Å.

4. (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein the etching comprises a wet etching process.

5. (Original): The method of claim 4, wherein the exposing also exposes a portion of the uniform region of the planarized layer.

6. (Original): The method of claim 5, wherein the wet etching also removes the exposed portion of the uniform region of the planarized layer.

7. (Currently amended): A method of fabricating a semiconductor device, the method comprising:

depositing a single and continuous layer to a predetermined thickness on a wafer, the deposited layer comprising a uniform region of uniform thickness extending along a wafer surface at which the deposited layer is uniformly planarized, and a non-uniform region of non-uniform thickness ~~corresponding to~~ extending along an upper sidewall of the wafer at which the deposited layer is non-uniformly planarized, wherein the non-uniform thickness is greater than the uniform thickness;

coating a photoresist layer on the deposited layer;

removing a portion of the photoresist layer coated on an edge portion of the uniform region of the deposited layer and on the non-uniform region of the deposited layer, thereby exposing at least the non-uniform region of the deposited layer;

etching at least the exposed non-uniform region of the deposited layer;

stripping a remaining portion of the coated photoresist layer on the deposited layer; and

planarizing the uniform region of the deposited layer to thereby forming a pattern layer comprising the uniform region of the planarized layer.

8. (Original): The method of claim 7, wherein the planarizing comprises a chemical mechanical polishing (CMP) process.

9. (Original): The method of claim 7, wherein the coating of the photoresist layer continues until the photoresist layer has a thickness of approximately 5000-15000 Å.

10. (Original): The method of claim 7, wherein the etching comprises a wet etching process.

11. (Original): The method of claim 10, wherein the exposing also exposes a portion of the uniform region of the deposited layer.

12. (Original): The method of claim 11, wherein the wet etching also removes the exposed portion of the uniform region of the deposited layer.

13. (Currently amended): A method of fabricating a semiconductor device, the method comprising:

depositing a single and continuous layer to a predetermined thickness on a principle surface of a wafer, wherein the layer is deposited such that a portion of the layer extends outwardly from the principle surface so as to cover an upper sidewall of the wafer;

planarizing the deposited layer to remove a portion of the deposited layer, the resulting planarized layer comprising a uniform region of uniform thickness extending along the principle surface of the wafer at which the deposited layer is uniformly planarized, and a non-uniform region of non-uniform thickness extending along the upper sidewall of the wafer at which the deposited layer is non-uniformly planarized, wherein the non-uniform thickness is greater than the uniform thickness;

patterning a photoresist layer on the planarized layer, wherein the photoresist layer is patterned so as to expose the non-uniform region of the planarized layer and an edge portion of the uniform region of the planarized layer directly adjacent the non-uniform region;

removing the non-uniform region of the planarized layer and the edge portion of the uniform region of the planarized layer using the patterned photoresist as a mask; and stripping the patterned photoresist layer.

14. (previously presented): The method of claim 13, wherein the planarizing comprises a chemical mechanical polishing (CMP) process.

15. (previously presented): The method of claim 13, wherein the patterning of the photoresist layer includes coating of a photoresist material to a thickness of approximately 5000-15000 Å.

16. (previously presented): The method of claim 13, wherein the non-uniform region of the planarized layer and the edge portion of the uniform region of the planarized layer are removed by at least a wet etching process.

17. (new): The method of claim 1, wherein the single and continuous layer is deposited by chemical vapor deposition (CVD).

18. (new): The method of claim 7, wherein the single and continuous layer is deposited by chemical vapor deposition (CVD).

19. (new): The method of claim 13, wherein the single and continuous layer is deposited by chemical vapor deposition (CVD).